



Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

Presented by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

February 20, 2013

**In Support of Maintaining the Funding for the Tax Abatement Grant Program and
Supporting Senior Housing with Services**

**HB 6350, An Act Concerning the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2015, and other
Provisions Relating to Revenue**

LeadingAge Connecticut is a membership organization representing over one hundred and thirty mission-driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults throughout the continuum of long term care, including affordable senior housing. Our members are sponsored by religious, fraternal, community, and municipal organizations that are committed to providing quality care and services to their residents and clients. Our member organizations, many of which have served their communities for generations, are dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut, I would like submit the following testimony in strong support of maintaining the \$1.7 million in state funding for the Tax Abatement Grant program for nonprofit-sponsored affordable housing.

Three of LeadingAge Connecticut's housing members providing a total of 654 units of affordable senior housing would be affected by the loss of these funds. These nonprofit providers, *Immanuel House* in Hartford, *Towers One/Tower East* in New Haven, and *King's Daughters and Sons Housing* in Norwalk, will be asked to absorb tax payments in the tens of thousands of dollars - and they may not be able to do so.

This proposed cut to non-profit senior housing does not make sense when you consider the state's strategic vision for long term care. The State of Connecticut has adopted a *Long Term Services and Supports Plan* that calls for the rebalancing of our system of aging services. Hoping to decrease dependence on nursing home care, the state is placing a priority on providing person-centered care that will allow older adults to remain at home and be supported in the community. The availability of affordable senior housing where aging adults can receive community based services and supports, is a key element to this and any rebalancing plan. Also essential is the appropriate funding of the service programs that assist senior housing residents, such as the resident service coordinator program and the affordable assisted living program.

As we move toward making a balanced long term care system a reality, affordable residential options must be made available so that low- and modest- income older adults can indeed remain in the community. Many seniors cannot find decent housing at a cost they can afford. In fact, efforts to transition people to community-based settings frequently are stymied by the lack of

suitable and affordable housing. If the state truly wants a more balanced system of long term care, we will need to continue to invest in affordable housing alternatives and not cut the funding to our current stock.

Older adults must be afforded the opportunity to remain in the towns and cities that they have lived in or to be near the families that they love. Passing this tax burden to the stressed municipalities is not an acceptable answer. We urge the state to maintain the tax abatement funding and demonstrate their commitment to providing affordable community based options for older adults.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

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